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54 Precision lens mounting.

57 A precision lens mounting assembly which includes a plurality of lens cells and a plurality of lenses which correspond to the plurality of lens cells. The lens cells have an annular shape. Flexure means are disposed within the inner diameter of the lens cell which hold the lens in a predetermined spatial relation at a datum temperature to the lens cell. The flexure means return the lenses to this predetermined spatial relation following temperature excursions away from, then back to, the datum temperature. The outer diameter of the lens cells in the assembly are all substantially equal and substantially concentric about the optical axis of the lenses they hold. The upper and lower surfaces of the lens cell each have three or more precision surfaces disposed on a plane. The planes are perpendicular to the optical axis of the lens and have a predetermined spatial relation to the apex of the lens. Selected ones of the lens cells can be rotated, translated or moved axially with respect to the other lens cells in the lens assembly to correct for astigmatism, coma or spherical aberrations, respectively. Adhesive means are provided to hold the plurality of the lens cells together.

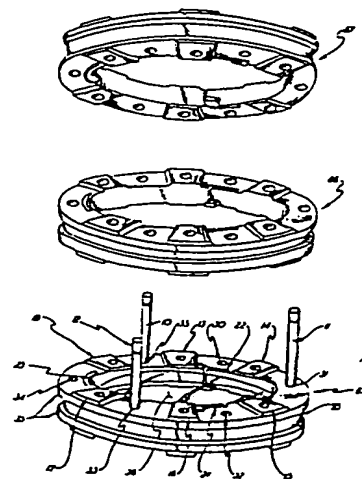


FIG. 1

PRECISION LENS MOUNTING

The first cell is positioned with two or more dowel pins projecting from its seating surface. The next cell is positioned with clearance holes around the pins. The vee block walls establish the centration of the cell, hence of the lenses. Plastic dowsing cement is

poured into the interface between the dowel and the cell with a seal between cells to prevent the cement from leaking and contacting the cell below. This is done one at a time until the entire assembly is epoxy-pinned together. Thus is formed a rigid, accurately positioned final lens assembly.

There has thus been outlined rather broadly the more important features of the invention in order that the detailed description thereof that follows may be better understood, and in order that the present contribution to the art may be better appreciated. There are, of course, additional features of the invention which will be described hereinafter and which will form the subject of the claims appended hereto. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the conception upon which the disclosure is based may readily be utilized as a basis for the designing of other assemblies for carrying out the several purposes of the invention. It is important, therefore, that the claims be regarded as including such equivalent assemblies as do not depart from the spirit and scope of the invention.

Several embodiments of the invention have been chosen for purposes of illustration and description, and are shown in the accompanying drawings, forming a part of the specification.

Brief Description of the Drawing

Fig. 1 shows an exploded view of a group of lens cells constructed in accordance with the present invention;

Fig. 2A shows, schematically, an embodiment of a flexure constructed in accordance with the present invention;

Fig. 2B is a top view of the flexure of Fig. 2;

Fig. 3 is another form of the flexure of Fig. 2;

Fig. 4 is another embodiment of a flexure constructed in accordance with the present invention;

Fig. 5A is another embodiment of flexure constructed in accordance with the present invention;

Fig. 5B is a cross-sectional view of the flexure of Fig. 5A with a projection land;

Fig. 5C is a cross-sectional view of the flexure of Fig. 5A with a projection land;

Fig. 6 is a vacuum chuck useful in fabricating a lens cell in accordance with the present invention;

Fig. 7 shows a lens mounted on the vacuum chuck shown in Fig. 6;

Fig. 8 shows, schematically, an apparatus useful in aligning the lens cell surfaces to the lens;

Fig. 9 shows, schematically, the apparatus of Fig. 8 after the alignment of lens to lens cell is complete;

Fig. 10 shows a lens assembly;

Fig. 11 shows an apparatus useful in aligning the lens assembly of Fig. 10;

Fig. 12 shows a vee block useful in the apparatus of Fig. 11;

Fig. 13 shows, schematically, the floating mount useful in the apparatus of Fig. 11;

Fig. 14 shows an apparatus useful in holding

the cells in a lens assembly in proper relation during epoxy pinning;

Fig. 15 shows another form of the apparatus of Fig. 14;

Fig. 16 shows, in top view, a manner in which translation of the individual cells in the assembly of Fig. 10 can be accomplished;

Fig. 17 shows, schematically, a manner in which translation of the individual cells in the assembly of Fig. 10 can be accomplished;

Fig. 18 shows, schematically, a manner in which axial movement of the cells with respect to one another can be accomplished; and

Fig. 19 shows, schematically, a manner in which axial movement of the cells with respect to one another can be accomplished.

Detailed Description of the Invention

Fig. 1 is an exploded view of a group of lens cells, 85, 86 and 87 constructed in accordance with the present invention. The individual lens cells, for example 85, are generally annular rings within which an optical element, for example, a lens 36, is disposed.

It is a characteristic of any solid material that it undergoes dimensional changes as the ambient temperature changes. Some materials undergo greater dimensional changes than others in response to temperature changes, that is, they have a different coefficient of thermal expansion. Any material, bonded to a material with a differing coefficient of expansion, will experience stress at the point of bonding during temperature excursions. Such stresses can cause permanent distortion or dimensional changes to the materials and can cause a change in the orientation of one material to the other. Such dimensional or orientation changes can be disastrous in optical systems where optic spacing, centration and wedge must be held to close tolerances.

In the embodiment of the invention shown in Fig. 1, three cantilevered flexures 22, 23 and 24 are provided, to which the lens 36 is bonded. The construction and use of the flexures 22, 23 and 24 are explained hereinbelow in reference to Figs. 2-5.

The lens cell 85 also has precision machined surfaces 13-18 on its top. The machined surfaces are so located that they match precision machined surfaces on the bottom of lens cell 86. It should be understood that while six precision machined surfaces 13-18 are shown in Fig. 1, there may be any number in excess of three. In this way cells can be rotated with respect to each other through small angles, such as 60° in the case where six precision machined surfaces are provided. By rotating select cells with respect to each other, the wavefront emanating from a series of lenses constrained within cells can be selectively changed. The method whereby a wavefront is adjusted is more fully explained in reference to Figs. 10 and 11.

As described hereinbelow in reference to Figs. 8 and 9, the precision machined surfaces 13-18 are in a plane which is perpendicular to the optical axis of the lens 36 contained in the cell 85. In addition, the distance from that plane to the vertex of the lens 36

is known. In this manner the vertices of lenses in adjoining cells can be established during precision machining of the lens cells.

The outer diameter 35 of the lens cell 85 is also precision machined with respect to the lens 36 contained therein. The outer diameter 35 is symmetrical about the optical axis of the lens 36. In addition, the outer diameter 35 of lens cell 85 is equal to that of all the other lens cells in an assembly. Thus, when the outer diameters of all lens cells in an assembly are co-cylindrical, the optical axes of all the lenses contained within the lens cells in such an assembly are co-axial. The apparatus and method to achieve such symmetry is explained more fully below in reference to Figs. 8 and 9. Circumferential channel 95 is useful with the apparatus shown hereinbelow in Fig. 16 to provide for translational movements of one cell with respect to the other cells during the stacking of cells into a lens assembly.

Holes 30-35 and dowels 10-12 are used in an epoxy pinning technique to bond cells 85, 86 and 87 together into a unitary, rigid assembly of cells. As shown in Fig. 1, holes 31, 33 and 35 are adapted to hold dowels 10-12. This can be done, for example, by providing external threads on the dowels 10-12 which are threaded into tapped holes 31, 33 and 35. Bores through cells 86 and 87 are located so as to receive the dowels 10-12 extending from the top surface of cell 85 when cells 86 and 87 are stacked on cell 85. Epoxy, not shown, is then disposed between the dowels 10-12 and the corresponding bores in cells 86 and 87 to complete the epoxy bonding of cells 85, 86 and 87. This technique is more fully described hereinbelow in reference to Fig. 10.

Fig. 2A shows an embodiment of a flexure in accordance with the present invention.

The flexure 22 is integral with the inner wall of the lens cell 85. Extending radially inward from the flexure 22, and attached thereto, is the lens seat 29. The lens seat 29 has a trough 38 formed therein which serves as a receptacle for the adhesive as described hereinbelow in reference to Fig. 3 and establishes a specific bondline thickness.

The flexure 22 is formed by, for example, wire electron discharge machining or milling a slot 42 into the wall of the lens cell 85. Such a slot 42 is radially located at a depth 'd' in the inner wall of the lens cell 85. The slot 42 begins at one end of the lens seat 29 and describes an arc of length 'a' about the center of the lens cell 85. The width of the finished flexure 22 is 'w' as shown.

Fig. 2B shows the manner in which the lens 36 is bonded to the flexure 22. Adhesive, such as EC 1338, available from the 3M Corporation, is placed in the trough so as to bond the lens 36 to the lens seat 29. The trough is sized to establish a bondline of cement which will withstand the stresses imparted to it during temperature excursions as described hereinbelow. There adhesive is placed in the trough 33 such that when the lens 36 is bonded to the seat 29 the excess adhesive does not overflow the seat 29 and create a fillet. It should be noted that the radius of curvature of the seat surface 39 may match the curvature of the lens 36 to which it is bonded. For

large radii lenses the match between the radius of curvature of the lens 36 and the seat surface 39 diminishes in importance and can be machined at an angle with the center of the bondline forming a tangent to the lens curvature.

The lens 36 is bonded to the lens cell 85 in the following manner. Adhesive 40 is placed in the trough 38 of the seat 29. This process is carried out for each of the flexures 22, 23 and 24 of Fig. 1. The lens 36 is then placed into the lens cell and pressed down onto the lens seat 29 such that the excess adhesive 40 is extruded from the trough 38 radially outward between the lens 36 and the seat surface 39. The lens 36 is centered in any convenient manner such that the outside diameter of the lens 36 is substantially concentric with the inside diameter of the lens cell 85. This assembly is performed at an ambient datum temperature, preferably the temperature at which the assembly will be operating.

Referring now to Figs. 2A and 2B, the operation of the flexure 22 can now be explained. As the ambient temperature cycles up or down, the relative diameter of the lens cell 85 and the diameter of the lens 36 changes. For example, consider the case where the coefficient of expansion of the lens cell 85 is considerably greater than that for the lens 36. As the temperature increases from the datum temperature, the lens cell 85 expands and the inner diameter of the lens cell 85 becomes larger. At the same time the lens 36, hence its outside diameter, becomes larger but not to the same degree as the lens cell 85. In the prior art configuration, wherein no flexures are present, the lens would move relative to the lens seat causing the adhesive bond to shift or break due to the imposed stresses. In the embodiment of the present invention as shown in Figs. 2A and 2B, the lens seat 29 remains substantially fixed with respect to the lens 36. As the inner diameter of the lens cell 85 expands away from the lens 36, the arm 25 of the flexure 22 flexes. That is, the arm 25 moves such that the flexure slot width, f, increases. When the temperature decreases and stabilizes at the datum temperature the flexure 22 returns to its original configuration and the lens 36 is retained in its original position, centered within the lens cell 22. At no time does the flexure arm 25, lens 36 or adhesive layer 40 reach the allowable stress limits of their respective materials.

Conversely, as the ambient temperature falls below the datum temperature the diameter of the lens cell 85 contracts, the lens 36 also contracts but to a lesser degree than the lens cell 85. Consequently the flexure arm flexes 25 such that the flexure slot width, f, decreases. As in the case of increasing temperature the lens seat 29 retains its spatial orientation with respect to the lens 36 and the integrity of the adhesive layer 40 is retained. In this way, when the temperature returns to the datum temperature the lens 36 is in the same orientation with respect to the lens cell 85 as when it was fabricated.

As the flexure moves, a small torsional stress is imparted to the adhesive layer 40 as shown by the arrow 43. The adhesive layer 40 has a large enough area so that it is not deformed or broken by this

stress. In addition, the shape and location of the adhesive layer 40 will not cause a distortion of the transmitted wavefront in the vicinity of the bondline.

Fig. 3 shows another form of the flexure of Figs. 2A and 2B. In the form of Fig. 3 the flexure arm 25 is of two widths, W_1 and W_2 . W_1 is the width of the flexure arm 25 formed in the manner described in reference to Fig. 2A. W_2 , however, is a narrower width than W_1 and is formed by, for example, machining down the narrow section 41 of the flexure arm 25. The narrow section 41 of the flexure arm 25 extends from the edge of the lens seat 29 a distance 'a', along the length of the flexure arm 25. The purpose of the narrow section 41 is to further reduce the stress experienced by the adhesive layer 40 shown in Fig. 2B. As the lens cell 22 expands relative to the lens 36 the flexure arm 25 flexes and a slight torsional stress is introduced to the adhesive layer 40 at the lens seat 39. This stress is as shown by the arrow 43 in Fig. 2B. The narrow section 41 of the flexure arm 25 of Fig. 3 reduces the torsional stress by allowing the section of the flexure arm containing the lens seat 29 to rotate relative to the rest of the flexure arm 25, thus substantially maintaining the orientation of the lens 36 to the seat surface 39 while maintaining the stiffness of the flexure arm 25 in the axial direction.

Another form of the flexure is shown in cross-section in Fig. 4. The flexure 52 is fabricated by machining, for example, radial slots, on either side of the lens seat 29, a distance t_1 into the wall of the lens cell 85. One such radial slot is shown at 44. Two axial slots, 48 and 50, are then formed. One axial slot, 50, is formed midway between the inner diameter of the lens cell 85 and the end of radial slot 44. It begins at the bottom of the lens cell 85, runs parallel to the inner diameter of the lens cell 85, and extends to within a distance t_2 of the top of the lens cell. The second axial slot is parallel to the first, begins at the end of radial slot 44 and at the top of the lens cell and extends to within the distance t_3 of the bottom of the lens cell.

The operation of the flexure 52 of Fig. 4 is equivalent to that described for the flexure 22 of Figs. 2A and 2B. As the ambient temperature changes, the flexure 52 moves in or out relative to the lens cell 20 to compensate for different thermal growth rates of the lens 36 and lens cell 20. In this way there is no change in the orientation of the lens 36 to the lens seat surface 39 when the lens cell/lens assembly returns to a predetermined datum temperature following temperature excursions.

Another form of the flexure 22, in accordance with the present invention, is shown in Figs. 5A-5C. In this form a peripheral bondline 45 is formed between the flexure arm 25 and the diameter of the lens 36. A projection land 37 can be provided so as to maintain a clearance between the lens 36 and the inner diameter of the lens cell 85. Fig. 5B is a cross-section of a flexure arm 25 without the projection land shown in Fig. 5A. To bond the lens 36 to the flexure arm 25 the lens is held, in any convenient manner, adjacent to the hole 35 in the flexure arm. Injection means, not shown, are then inserted into port 43 and a thixotropic, or viscous, cement is injected through

the hole 35 to form a cement bondline 45 between the lens 36 and the flexure arm 25. A similar procedure is followed in the case where a projection land 37 is provided, as shown in Fig. 5C. Thixotropic cement, injected through the hole 35, forms a bondline 45 between the projection land 37 and the lens 36. It can be understood by those skilled in the art that the thickness shown as 'b' of the bondline 45 is established by the clearance between the lens 36 and flexure arm 25 in Fig. 5B or the lens 36 and projection land 37 in Fig. 3C.

The operation of the flexures 22 of Figs. 5B and 5C are equivalent to that described in reference to the flexure 22 of Figs. 2A and 2B.

It should be noted that the bondline 45 in the flexures 22 of Figs. 5B and 5C is in tension or compression during temperature excursions above or below the datum temperature respectively. This is due to the fact that as the temperature increases above the datum point, the lens cell 85 expands to a greater extent than the lens 36. As explained hereinabove in reference to Figs. 2A and 2B the flexure arm 25 flexes to maintain the bondline 45 to the lens 36. This flexing, however, is not perfect and a small amount of tension is introduced in the bondline 45. Conversely, when the ambient temperature drops below the datum temperature, the diameter of the lens cell 85 contracts while the lens 36 also contracts, but to a lesser degree. Accordingly, a degree of compression is introduced to the cement bondline 45. In either case of increasing or decreasing temperature, the stiffness of the lens 36 to lens cell 85 is maintained in the axial direction.

Referring now to Figs. 6-9, the apparatus and method for machining the precision surfaces and the outer diameter of the lens cell will be explained.

Fig. 6 shows a vacuum chuck 54 useful in the present invention for holding the lens 36 and lens cell 20 while it is being machined. The machining is carried out after the lens 36 has been assembled in the lens cell 20 in the manner described hereinabove.

The vacuum chuck 54 has a base 60 which is attached to the spindle of a lathe, not shown. Preferably, the lathe spindle is supported by an air bearing. Attached to the base 60, and disposed about the spin-axis 64 of the vacuum chuck 54, is a cylindrical riser 58. At the top of the riser 58 is the chuck seat 56.

Fig. 7 shows the interrelationship between a lens 36 and the vacuum chuck 54 to which it is held. For the purpose of illustration only, Fig. 7 shows the lens 36 without the lens cell to which it is attached.

The lens 36 has two surfaces, 55 and 57, each of which has a radius of curvature R_1 and R_2 , respectively. So as to facilitate the seating and centering of the lens 36 onto the vacuum chuck 54, the chuck seat 56 is machined to have the same radius of curvature, R_1 , as lens surface 55. In this way lens surface 55 of the lens 36 and the chuck seat 56 are match-mated to each other. This minimizes hertzian seating stresses on the lens 36 as well as establishing the coordinates for matching the lens cell as described hereinbelow in reference to Fig. 9.

As shown in Fig. 7, the lens 36 is not a flat.

Accordingly, the center of curvature of the chuck seat 56 is machined to be on the spin axis 64 of the vacuum chuck 54. By making the lens surface 55 match-mated to the chuck seat 56, the center of curvature 61 of lens surface 55 is always on the spin axis 64 of the vacuum chuck 54. The alignment of the center of curvature 63 of lens surface 57 to the spin axis 64 is explained hereinbelow in reference to Fig. 8. If the lens 36 is a flat, the chuck seat 56 is machined perpendicular to the spin axis 64 of the vacuum chuck 54.

To retain the lens 36 and cell 20 assembly to the vacuum chuck 54 a vacuum is drawn, within the riser 58 through passage 62 by vacuum means, not shown. When a low vacuum is drawn, the lens 36 and cell 20 assembly are held to the vacuum chuck 54 but can be rotated radially relative to the vacuum chuck 54. This facilitates alignment of the optical axis of the lens 36 to the spin axis 64 of the vacuum chuck as explained hereinbelow in reference to Fig. 8. Following alignment a strong vacuum is drawn in the vacuum chuck 54 to hold the lens 36 and lens cell 20 assembly during the machining of the lens cell 20 as described hereinbelow in reference to Fig. 9.

Fig. 8 illustrates a manner in which the alignment of the optical axis 66 of the lens 36 to the spin axis 64 of the vacuum chuck 54 can be accomplished.

The chuck 54 is shown mounted to the lathe spindle 70 through the chuck base 60. As described in reference to Fig. 7, the chuck base 60 is attached to a riser 58 which terminates in a chuck seat 56 upon which the lens 36 is seated. A TIR gauge 68 is placed on the surface of the lens 36 opposite the vacuum chuck 54. If, as shown in Fig. 8, the optical axis 66 of the lens 36 is not on the spin axis 64 of the vacuum chuck 54, the meter showing the run-out detected by the gauge 68 will be other than zero. The lens 36 can then be moved relative to the chuck seat 56 until the gauge readout 69 shows a minimum acceptable run-out. This puts the optical axis of the lens 36 on the spindle spin axis 64 and thus the vacuum chuck 54 as shown in Fig. 9.

Fig. 9 also shows a tool bit 74, for example, a diamondpoint tool, and a tool controller 76. It can be appreciated by those skilled in the art that with the spin axis of the chuck 64 coincident with the optical axis 66 of the lens 36, the vertex 79 of the lens 36 is on the spin axis 64 of the vacuum chuck 54. Since the radius of curvature of the lens 36 is match mated to the radius of curvature of the chuck seat 56 and the apex 79 of the lens 36 is on the spin axis 64 of the vacuum chuck 54, the position of the vertex 79 is precisely known with respect to the vacuum chuck 54. The apex 79 is taken, then, as the (0,0,0) point for the tool 74. In this way all surfaces on the cell 20 can be machined precisely with respect to the vertex 79 and optical axis 64 of the lens 36.

Referring to Fig. 1 and Fig. 9, it can be appreciated that the outer diameter 33 of the lens cell 20 can be machined concentric about the optical axis 66 of the lens 36. Further, the precision machined surfaces 13-18 can be machined perpendicular to the optical axis of the lens 36 and located precisely with respect to the vertex 79 of the lens 36. All of the lens cells in

an assembly of lens cells have their outer diameters machined to a common dimension. Thus, when the lens cells are stacked, in a manner described in reference to Fig. 10, the outer diameter of all the lens cells is made to be co-cylindrical to establish a common optical axis for the lenses in the assembly. The distance from the lens apexes to the cell surfaces perpendicular to the optical axis of the lens establishes the optical spacings when the lens cells are stacked and secured to each other.

Fig. 10 shows a lens assembly 94. The lens cells 80-92 are stacked together and the wavefront directed therethrough is adjusted in a manner described hereinbelow in reference to Fig. 11. Briefly, the optical characteristics of the wavefront can be changed by rotating, translating or axially moving selected ones of the lens cells with respect to others in the lens assembly 94. Selected ones of the lens cells can be moved axially with respect to the other lens cells in a lens assembly to correct for spherical aberrations. This can be accomplished by changing the thickness of shims 104 or through the use of the apparatus shown in Figs. 18 and 19. Coma can be corrected by translating selected ones of the lens cells with respect to the other lens cells in a lens assembly as described herein in reference to Fig. 16. Further, by rotating selected ones of the lens cells with respect to others, astigmatism can be corrected.

Thirteen cells are shown bonded together in Fig. 10 as an example. It can be appreciated, however, that the cell-to-cell alignment and bonding method described herein is applicable to any plurality of cells. The cells 80-92 are then bonded together using, for example, dowels 102, plastic adhesive 100, and inter-cell seals. Figs. 14 and 15 show apparatus useful in holding the lens cells in their desired spatial relation during the bonding process.

As can be seen in Fig. 10, the lens assembly 94 is an assembly of discrete groups, for example, 81-83, 83-85, 85-87, 87-89 and 89-91. The lens assembly 94 has a bottom lens cell 80 and a cap lens cell 92 between which are disposed the groups of lens cells. It should be understood that the groups of lens cells may consist of any desired number of lens cells in excess of two.

Each group of lens cells has an anchor lens cells, for example 85, individual lens cells or cell, for example 86, and a top lens cell, for example 87. The top lens cell in a group also serves as an anchor lens cell if another group is stacked upon it. For example, lens cell 87 serves as a top lens cell for the group 85-87 and as the anchor lens cell for the group 87-89. As described hereinabove in reference to Fig. 1, two or more dowels 102 are anchored in each anchor cell, 85 for example, and extend through the individual cell or cells and the top cell in the group.

Pins 96 and 106 are shown to be conical. The conical shape of pins 96 and 106 allows them to be removed from their respective adhesive layers while retaining proper alignment to the remainder of the cells 81-91. This allows bottom lens cell 92 and cap lens cell 80 to be easily removed should they become damaged during assembly, transport or use.

holes 181, 182 and 183 to move the lens cell insert 175, hence the lens 185, in any desired direction. In this way the optical axis of the lens 185 can be moved relative to the optical axis of the other lenses in a lens assembly of which it is a part. The tapered outside diameter 179 of the lens cell insert 175 assures a downward force on the lens cell insert 175 which precludes introducing a tilt to the lens 185 during translation. Extending radially inward from lens cell 180 is lip 179. The top surface of lip 179 has a precision machined surface 195 which matches the precision machined surface 196 on the bottom of lens cell insert 175. The precision machined surfaces 195 and 196 establish the axial spacing of the lens cell insert 175, hence of the lens 185, with respect to the lens cell 180 and with respect to lens cells above or below lens cell 180 in a lens assembly.

An alternate technique to move individual cells axially with respect to each other is as shown in Figs. 18 and 19.

Fig. 18 shows a ball 186 disposed in a hole 187 in the top of a lens cell 20. The ball 186 is forced up when a tapered screw 188 is forced against it. A second lens cell, not shown, directly above the lens cell 20 will be forced upward when the ball 186 is so moved. Three such ball 186 and screw 188 arrangements are disposed at 120° intervals about the top of the lens cell 20.

Fig. 19 shows a half ball 190 disposed on a tapered cantilevered arm 192. As screw 194 is moved into the lens cell 20 it forces the tapered cantilevered arm 192 and ball 190 upward. A second lens cell, not shown, directly above the lens cell 20 will be forced upward when the ball 190 is so moved. Three such ball 190, arm 192 and screw 194 arrangements are disposed at 120° intervals about the top of the lens cell 20.

The apparatus shown in Figs. 18 and 19 for affecting axial movements of a lens cell can be used to tilt one lens cell, hence one lens, with respect to the others in an assembly. This is accomplished by moving the ball 186 of Fig. 18 or the ball 190 of Fig. 19 more or less than the other two balls in the apparatus.

When the lens assembly 94 is properly adjusted so as to provide the desired wavefront, the lens cells in the lens assembly 94 are epoxied together so as to form a unitary structure. It should be noted that the lens assembly can, at this point, be unstacked, then built up again, cell by cell, to facilitate the epoxying process. This unstacking and building up is done while retaining the as-adjusted wavefront. Referring to Fig. 10 it can be seen that the epoxying process is accomplished by injecting plastic dowling cement 100, such as, for example, EPON 828, into the interface between the dowel 102 and the cell. A seal 98, between cells, prevents the cement 100 from leaking and contacting the cell below. The dowels 102 are anchored in one cell, such as cell 85, by, for example, screwing the dowel 102 into a tapped hole in the cell 85. The dowel then extends through holes in one or more cells, 86 and 87, above the anchor cell 85. It should be noted that the holes in the cells 86 and 87 are roughly aligned to the dowels 102 prior to the fine alignment of the assembly 94 as described in reference to Fig. 11. By

doweling 3 to 5 cells together in the above-described manner, the lens assembly 94 can be assembled in a plurality of groups such as the group exemplified by cells 85-87. It can be understood by those skilled in the art that two or more continuous dowels, extending through all the cells 80-92, can be employed as an alternate to the above-described method.

Fig. 14 shows an apparatus useful in holding the cells in a lens assembly in fixed spatial relation to one another during plastic dowling assembly. A lens assembly 94 is shown in contact with the two faces 118 and 120 of the vee block 108. The spring loaded screw 150 contacts the individual cells in the lens assembly 94 by being moved relative to a screw block 152 which is fixed to the assembly station 114 of Fig. 11. In this way the unsymmetrical forces generated during cement curing, which tend to decenter the lens axis from the vee block axis, are overcome.

Fig. 15 illustrates an improvement to the device of Fig. 14 wherein a fork 154 is attached to the tip of the screw so that the force is more evenly distributed to the lens assembly 94.

There has thus been described a mounting device for optical elements which mounts such elements together in a unitary assembly. Such assembly is unaffected by large temperature excursions and is quickly, easily and accurately assembled.

While the present invention has been shown and described with reference to a preferred embodiment thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that changes in form or detail may be made therein without departure from the scope and intent of the invention. Accordingly, it is understood that the invention is to be broadly construed within the spirit and scope of the claims appended hereto.

Claims

1. A precision lens mounting assembly comprising:

a plurality of lens cells;

a plurality of lenses corresponding to said plurality of lens cells;

said lens cells having an inner diameter, an outer diameter, a top surface and a bottom surface;

flexure means disposed within the inner diameter of each of said plurality of lens cells to hold an individual lens in a predetermined spatial relation at a datum temperature to said inner diameter, said top surface and said bottom surface;

said flexure means returning said individual lens to said fixed spatial relation following temperature excursions away from then back to said datum temperature;

the outer diameter of said plurality of lens cells being substantially equal to each other and substantially concentric about the optical axis of their respective individual lenses;

the upper and lower surfaces of each lens cell

having three or more precision surfaces disposed on a plane substantially perpendicular to the optical axis of said individual lens, said plane having a predetermined spatial relation to the vertex of said individual lens; and said plurality of lens cells forming a stack of lens cells substantially in contact at said precision surfaces.

2. A precision lens mounting assembly as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said stack of lens cells comprises:

a bottom lens cell;
a cap lens cell; and

one or more groups of lens cells disposed between said bottom and said cap lens cell.

3. A precision lens mounting assembly as claimed in Claim 2 which further comprises holding means to hold said stack of lens cells substantially in contact at said precision surfaces.

4. A precision lens mounting assembly as claimed in Claim 3 wherein said holding means comprises:

one or more groups of lens cells comprising an anchor lens cell, one or more individual lens cells and a top lens cell;

at least two dowels fixed to the top surface of said anchor lens cell;

said one or more individual lens cells having bores therethrough for receiving said dowels;
said top lens cell having bores therethrough for receiving said dowels;

said top lens cell having at least two dowels fixed to the top surface thereof to fix the next group of individual lens cells thereto;

said dowels having an outside diameter smaller than the inside diameter of the bores;

epoxy disposed between said dowels and the bores through said individual lens cells and said top lens cell; and

seals to prevent said epoxy from escaping from the bores.

5. A precision lens mounting assembly as claimed in Claim 4 which further includes:

a bottom anchor cell in said stack of lens cells having at least two bottom conical dowels fixed to the bottom surface thereof;

said bottom lens cell having bores therethrough for receiving said bottom conical dowels;

a top group of lens cells wherein the top lens cell in said top group of lens cells has at least two top conical dowels fixed to the top surface thereof;

said cap lens cell having bores therethrough for receiving said top conical dowels;

said top and bottom conical dowels having an outside diameter smaller than the inside diameter of the bores;

epoxy disposed between said top and bottom conical dowels and the bore through said cap lens cell and said bottom lens cell, respectively; and

seals to prevent said epoxy from escaping from the bores.

6. A precision lens mounting assembly as

claimed in Claim 1 which further includes:
spacing adjustment means to adjust the axial spacing between selected ones of said lens cells.

7. A lens cell translation apparatus comprising:

a stack of a plurality of lens cells;

a precision vee block having two flat faces disposed at some angle to each other;

means to hold said stack of lens cells in contact with said two flat faces without imparting any stress to said stack of lens cells or to said two flat faces;

at least one pair of bayonets; and

said pair of bayonets being controllably inserted between a selected one of said lens cells in said lens cell stack and said two faces of said vee block so as to cause said selected one of said lens cells to move radially with respect to the remainder of said lens cells in said stack of lens cells.

8. A precision lens mounting apparatus comprising:

a lens cell insert having an inner diameter, a tapered outer diameter, a top surface and a precision machined bottom surface;

a lens;

flexure means disposed within the inner diameter of said lens cell insert to hold said lens in a predetermined spatial relation, at a datum temperature, to said inner diameter, said top surface and said bottom surface; and

said flexure means returning said lens to said fixed spatial relation following temperature excursions away from, then back to, said datum temperature;

a lens cell having an inner diameter, an outer diameter, a top and a bottom surface;

said lens cell having at least three threaded holes extending from said outer to said inner surface;

three screws corresponding to the three threaded holes in said lens cell;

a precision machined surface extending radially inward from the inner diameter of said lens cell; the tapered outer diameter of said lens cell insert being less than the inner diameter of said lens cell;

said precision machined bottom surface of said lens cell insert resting on said precision machined surface of said lens cell.

9. A precision lens mounting assembly as claimed in Claim 6 wherein said spacing adjusting means comprises a shim, said shim having a top precision surface substantially in contact with the precision surfaces on the bottom surface of a first selected one of said lens cells and a bottom precision surface substantially in contact with the precision surfaces of the top surface of a second selected one of said lens cell.

10. A precision lens mounting assembly as claimed in Claim 6 wherein said spacing adjusting means comprises:

at least three threaded holes extending radially

inward from the outer diameter of selected ones of said lens cells;

at least three tapered screws extending into the threaded holes;

axial moving means disposed on the upper surface of said selected ones of said lens cells; and

said tapered screws being radially translatable within the threaded holes to encounter said axial moving means, said axial moving means moving axially when said tapered screw is moved inwardly radially.

11. A precision lens mounting assembly as claimed in Claim 10 wherein said axial moving means comprises:

a ball disposed in a through bore; the through bore intersecting the tapered hole; and said ball resting on said tapered screw.

12. A precision lens mounting assembly as claimed in Claim 10 wherein said axial moving means comprises:

a tapered cantilevered beam having a top surface, a bottom tapered surface, a free end and a fixed end;

the top surface of said tapered cantilevered beam being substantially flush with the upper surface of the lens cell;

the bottom tapered surface contacting the tapered screw extending radially inwardly from the threaded hole;

the fixed end of the tapered cantilevered beam being substantially at the inner diameter of said lens cell;

said tapered cantilevered beam extending radially outwardly from said inner diameter of said lens cell; and

a half ball, said half ball being disposed on the top surface of said tapered cantilevered beam.

13. A precision lens mounting assembly as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said flexure means comprises:

at least three arcuate cantilevered arms integrally formed in said lens cells having a free end and a fixed end, the outer walls of said arms being substantially flush with said inner diameter; and

each of said arcuate cantilevered arms having lens seats distal said fixed end to support said individual lens in respective lens cells.

14. A precision lens mounting assembly as claimed in Claim 13 which further includes:

said lens seat extending radially inwardly from said lens cell inner diameter;

said lens seat having a trough therein; and adhesive disposed in said trough to adheringly hold said individual lens.

15. A precision lens mounting assembly as claimed in Claim 13 wherein said arcuate cantilevered arms have a narrow section extending from said lens seat towards said fixed end for a short distance.

16. A precision lens mounting assembly as claimed in Claim 15 which further includes:

said lens seat extending radially inwardly from said lens cell inner diameter;

said lens seat having a trough therein; and adhesive disposed in said trough to adheringly hold said individual lens.

17. A precision lens mounting assembly, as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said flexure means comprises:

an articulated flexure integrally formed in each of said lens cells;

said articulated flexure comprising a first arm located radially inwardly from said inner diameter of the lens cell joined at said bottom surface of the lens cell, said first arm extending axially to a joint at substantially said top surface; a second arm having an outer wall flush with said inner diameter, extending axially from said joint to substantially said bottom surface; and a lens seat extending radially inwardly from said second arm distal said joint to support said individual lens in its respective lens cell.

18. A precision lens mounting assembly as claimed in Claim 17 which further includes:

said lens seat having a trough therein; and adhesive disposed in said trough to adheringly hold said individual lens.

19. A precision lens mounting assembly as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said flexure means comprises:

at least three arcuate cantilevered arms integrally formed in said lens cells having a free end and a fixed end, the outer walls of said arms being substantially flush with said inner diameter;

each of said arcuate cantilevered arms having a hole therethrough distal said fixed end;

said lens cell having radial ports therethrough corresponding to the holes in each of said arcuate cantilevered arms;

adhesive disposed between said arcuate cantilevered arms and the circumference of said individual lens to adheringly hold said individual lens; and

said adhesive being disposed substantially at the holes in said arcuate cantilevered arms.

20. A precision lens mounting assembly as claimed in Claim 19 which further comprises:

said arcuate cantilevered arm having a projection land integral therewith;

said projection land projecting radially inwardly from said arcuate cantilevered arm distal said fixed end;

the hole extending through said projection land; and

said adhesive being disposed between said projection land and said lens.

21. A precision lens mounting apparatus comprising:

a lens cell having an inner diameter, an outer diameter, a top surface and a bottom surface; a lens;

flexure means disposed within the inner diameter of said lens cell to hold said lens in a predetermined spatial relation, at a datum temperature, to said inner diameter, said top surface and said bottom surface; and

said flexure means returning said lens to said

fixed spatial relation following temperature excursions away from, then back to, said datum temperature.

22. A precision lens mounting apparatus as claimed in Claim 21 wherein said flexure means comprises:

at least three arcuate cantilevered arms integrally formed in said lens cell having a free end and a fixed end, the outer walls of said arms being substantially flush with said inner diameter; and

each of said arcuate cantilevered arms having lens seats distal said fixed end for securing said individual lens to respective lens cells.

23. A precision lens mounting apparatus as claimed in Claim 22 which further includes:

said lens seat extending radially inwardly from said lens cell inner diameter;

said lens seat having a trough therein; and

adhesive disposed in said trough to adheringly hold said individual lens.

24. A precision lens mounting apparatus as claimed in Claim 23 wherein said arcuate cantilevered arms have a narrow section extending from said lens seat towards said fixed end for a short distance.

25. A precision lens mounting apparatus as claimed in Claim 21 wherein said flexure means comprises:

an articulated flexure integrally formed in said lens cell;

said articulated flexure comprising a first arm located radially inwardly from said inner diameter of the lens cell joined at said bottom surface of the lens cell, said first arm extending axially to a joint at substantially said top surface; a second arm having an outer wall flush with said inner diameter, extending axially from said joint to substantially said bottom surface; and a lens seat extending radially inwardly from said second arm distal said joint for securing said lens to said lens cell.

26. A precision lens mounting apparatus as claimed in Claim 25 which further comprises:

said lens seat having a trough therein; and

adhesive disposed in said trough to adheringly hold said individual lens.

27. A precision lens mounting assembly as claimed in Claim 21 wherein said flexure means comprises:

at least three arcuate cantilevered arms integrally formed in said lens cell having a free end and a fixed end, the outer walls of said arms being substantially flush with said inner diameter;

each of said arcuate cantilevered arms having a hole therethrough distal said fixed end;

said lens cell having radial ports therethrough corresponding to the holes in each of said arcuate cantilevered arms;

adhesive disposed between said arcuate cantilevered arms and the circumference of said lens to adheringly hold said lens; and

said adhesive being disposed substantially at the holes in said arcuate cantilevered arms.

28. A precision lens mounting assembly as claimed in Claim 27 which further comprises: said arcuate cantilevered arm having a projection land integral therewith;

said projection land projecting radially inwardly from said arcuate cantilevered arm distal said fixed end;

the hole extending through said projection land; and

said adhesive being disposed between said projection land and said lens.

29. A method for fabricating a precision lens cell assembly comprising:

providing a lens cell having a substantially annular shape, a top surface, a bottom surface and an outer diameter;

mounting a lens to the inner diameter of said lens cell;

mounting said lens to a vacuum chuck having a seat match-mated to the radius of curvature of the lens in contact with said seat;

placing a TIR gauge on said lens distal said vacuum chuck and radially outward from the spin axis of said vacuum chuck;

causing said vacuum chuck to spin;

moving said lens in relation to said vacuum chuck to substantially zero said run-out gauge; and

machining said outer diameter to be substantially concentric with the spin axis of said vacuum chuck, machining three or more precision surfaces on each of said top and said bottom surfaces, said precision surface lying on a plane perpendicular to said spin axis of said vacuum chuck, and in spaced relation to the vertex of said lens.

stacking a plurality of lens cells so machined;

bringing said plurality of lens cells into contact with the two faces of a precision vee block;

inspecting the wavefront that traverses the plurality of lenses;

correcting the wavefront by axially moving, rotating or translating selected ones of the lens cells; and

fixing together said lens cells into a unitary assembly.

30. A method for fabricating a precision lens cell assembly as claimed in Claim 29 wherein the step of fixing together said lens cells into a unitary assembly comprises:

providing a bottom lens cell;

providing a top lens cell;

providing one or more groups of lens cells;

epoxying said one or more groups of lens cells between said bottom lens cell and said top lens cell.

31. A method as claimed in Claim 30 wherein the step of providing one or more groups of lens cells comprises:

providing an anchor lens cell;

providing two or more dowels;

anchoring said two or more dowels in the top surface of said anchor lens cell;

providing one or more individual cells having bores therethrough of a larger diameter than

said dowels for receiving said dowels;
 providing a top lens cell having bores there-
 through for receiving said dowels and having at
 least two dowels anchored in the top surface
 thereof to fix the next group of individual lens
 cells thereto; 5
 disposing epoxy between said dowels and the
 bores through said individual lens cells and said
 top lens cell;
 providing seals to prevent said epoxy from 10
 escaping from the bores.

32. A method for fabricating a precision lens
 cell comprising:

providing a lens cell having a substantially
 annular shape, a top surface, a bottom surface 15
 and an outer diameter;
 mounting a lens to the inner diameter of said
 lens cell;
 mounting said lens to a vacuum chuck having a
 seat match-mated to the radius of curvature of 20
 the lens in contact with said seat;
 placing a TIR gauge on said lens distal said
 vacuum chuck and radially outward from the
 spin axis of said vacuum chuck;
 causing said vacuum chuck to spin; 25
 moving said lens in relation to said vacuum
 chuck to substantially zero said run-out gauge;
 and
 machining said outer diameter to be substan-
 tially concentric with the spin axis of said 30
 vacuum chuck, machining three or more preci-
 sion surfaces on each of said top and said
 bottom surfaces, said precision surfaces lying
 on a plane perpendicular to said spin axis of
 said vacuum chuck, and in spaced relation to 35
 the vertex of said lens.

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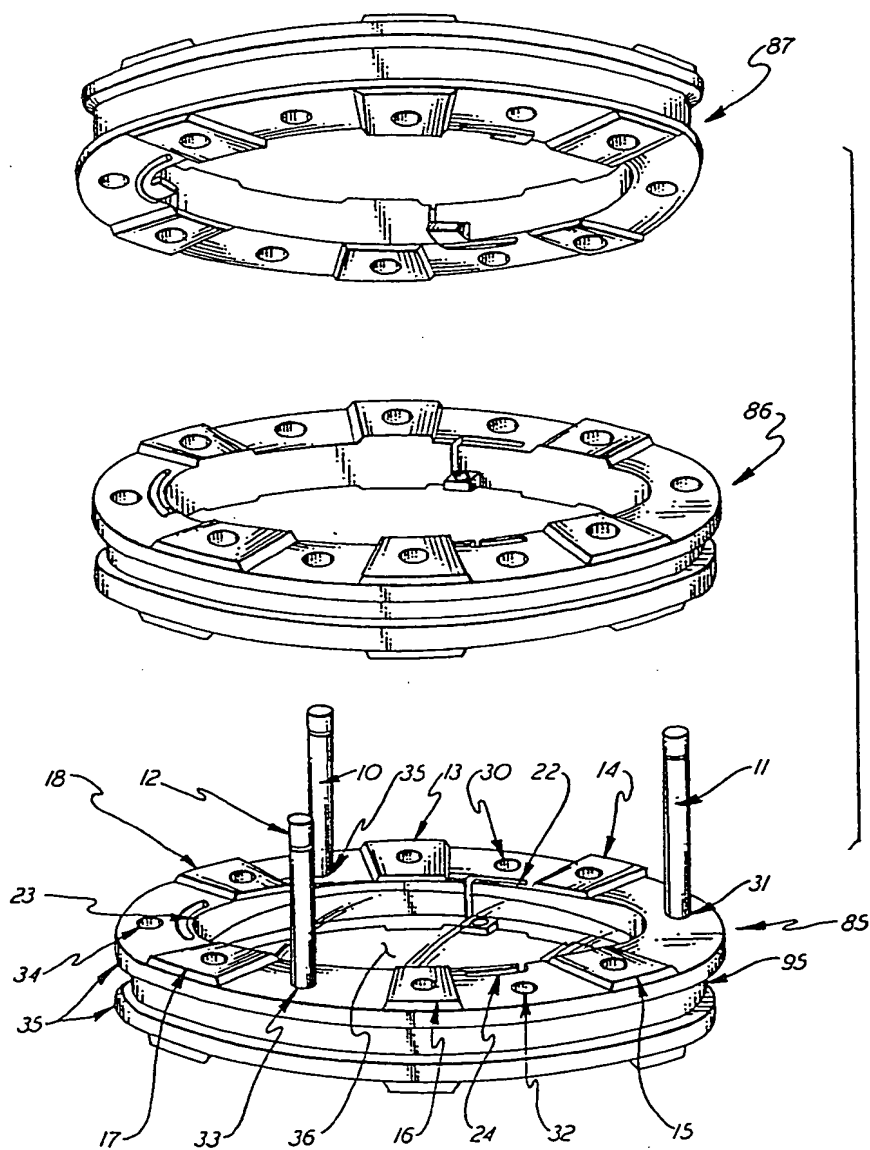


FIG. 1

FIG. 5A

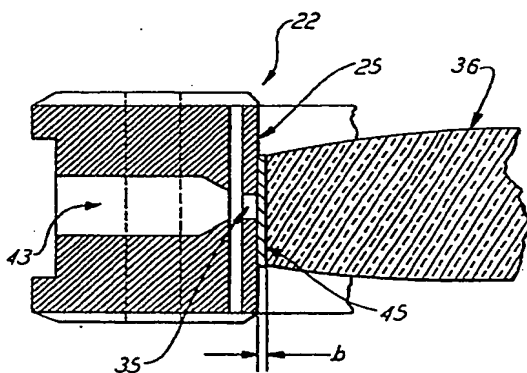
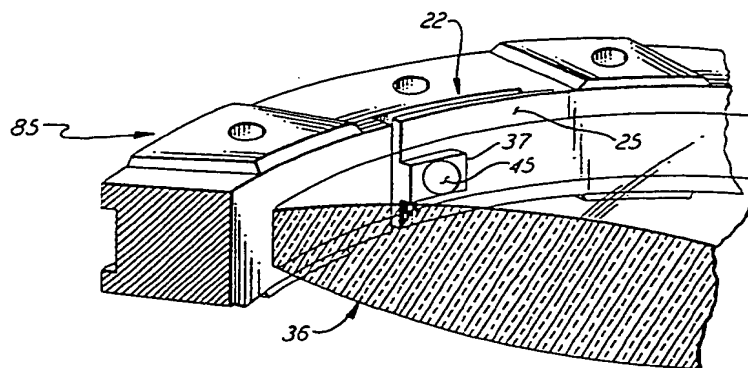
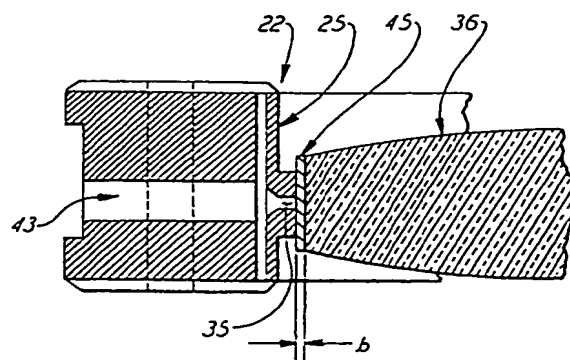


FIG. 5B

FIG. 5C



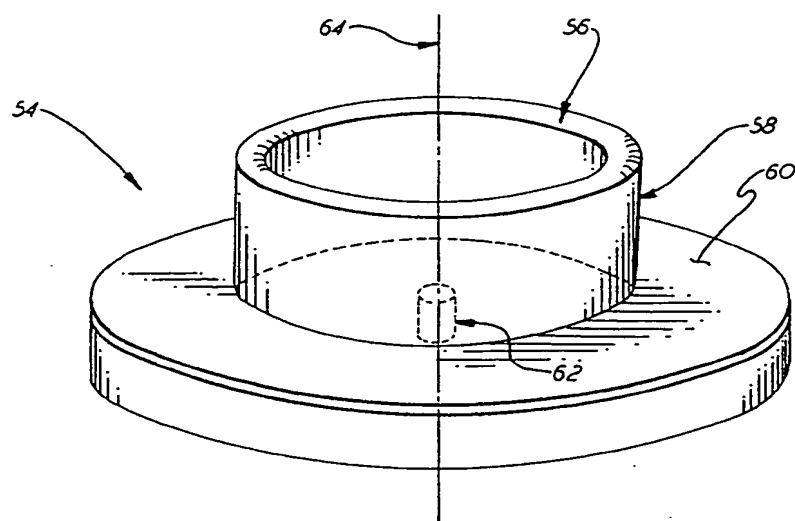


FIG. 6

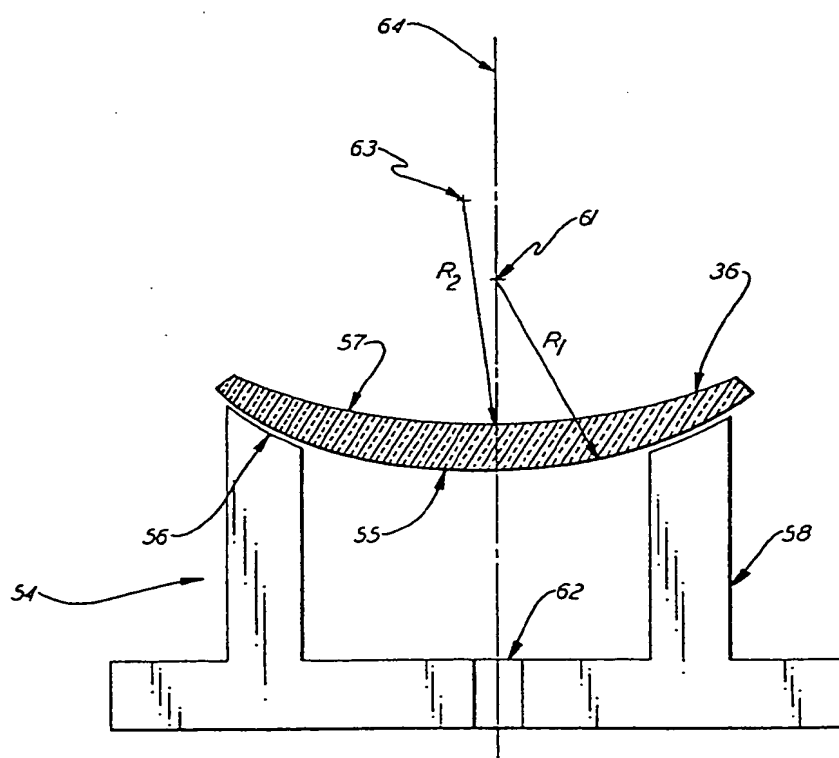
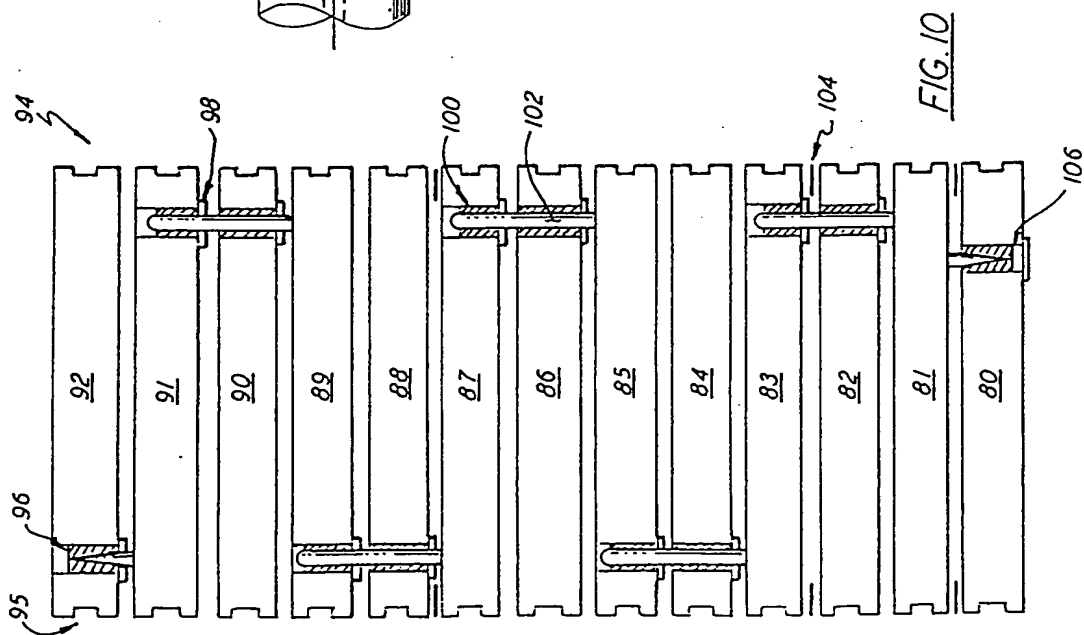
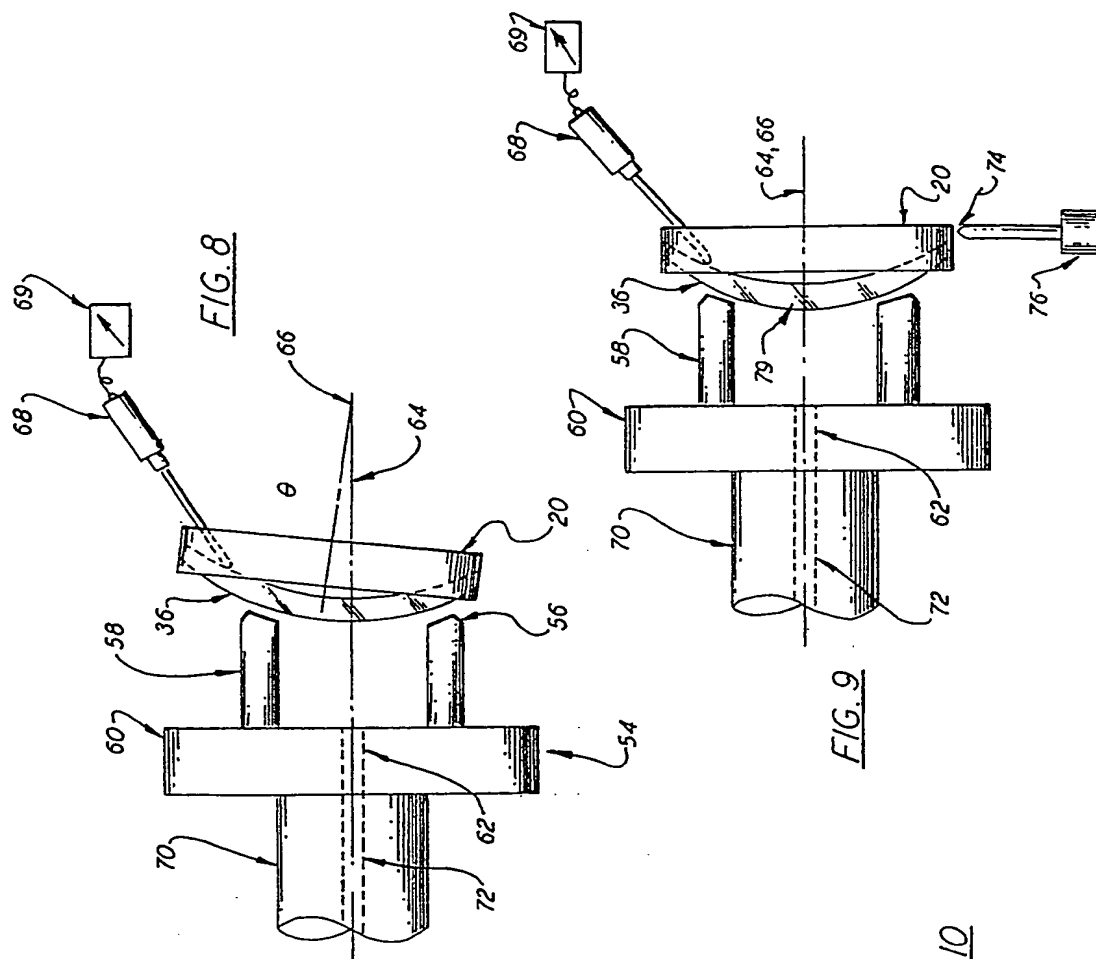
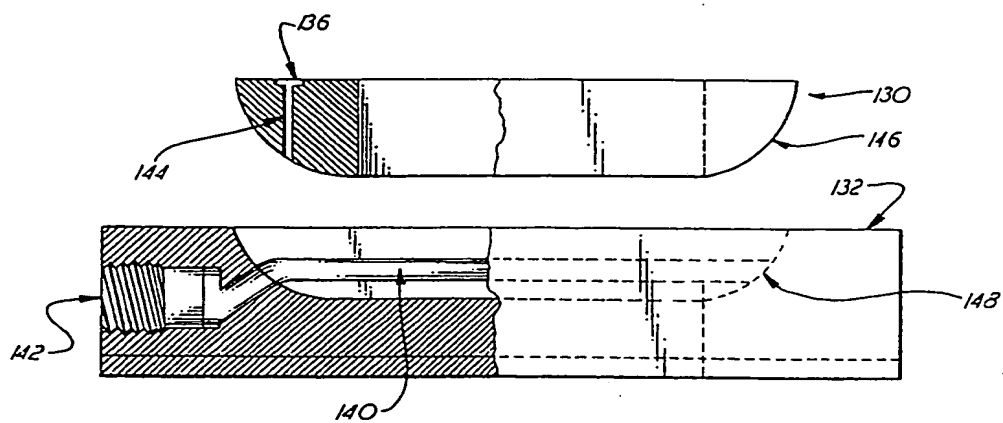
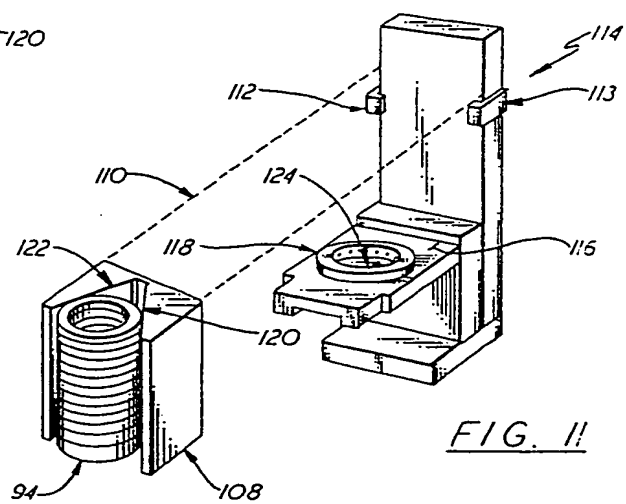
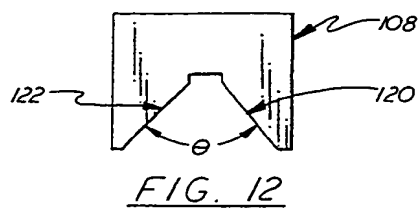


FIG. 7





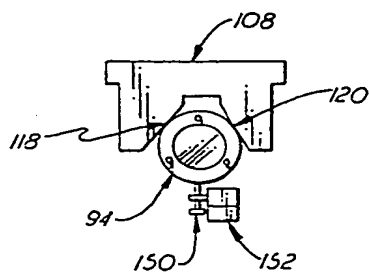


FIG. 14

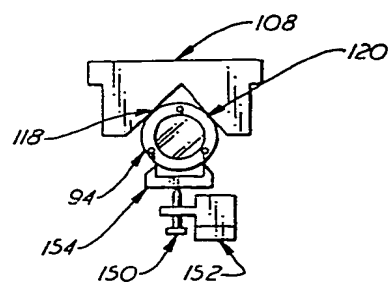


FIG. 15

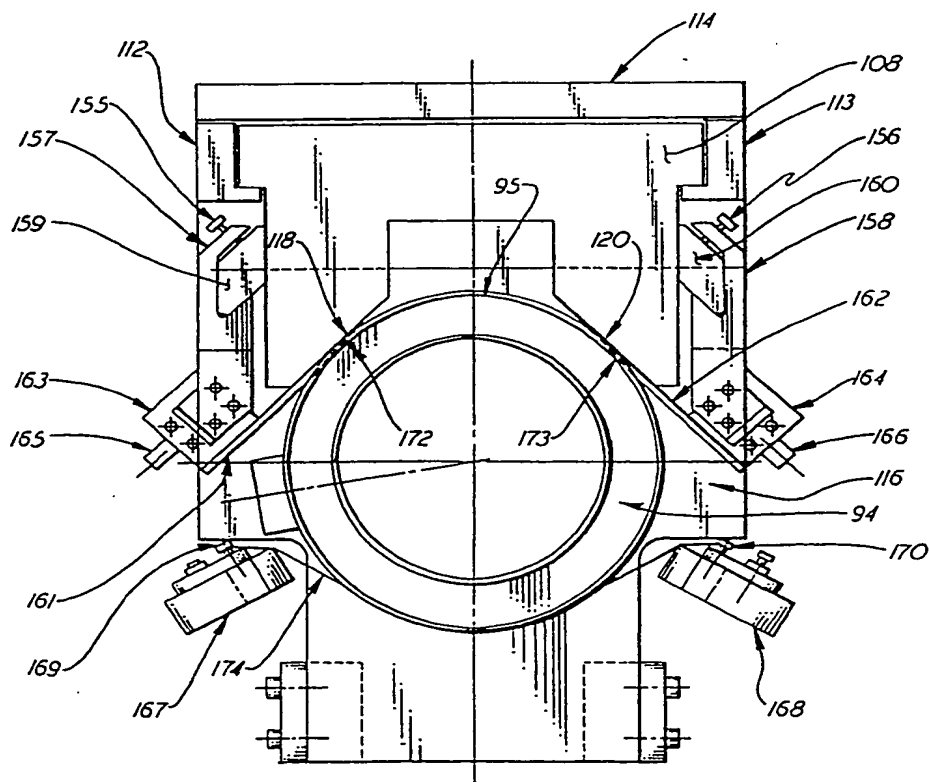
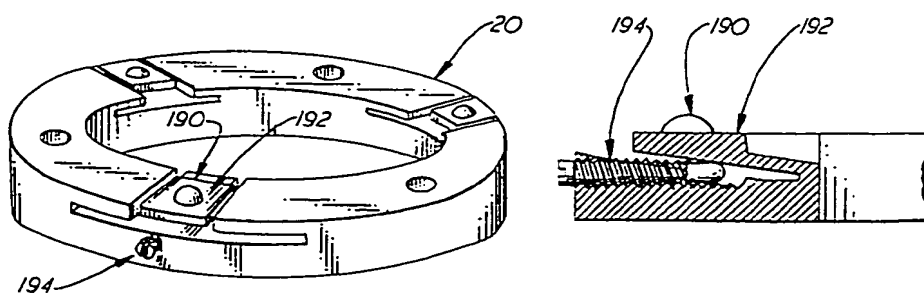
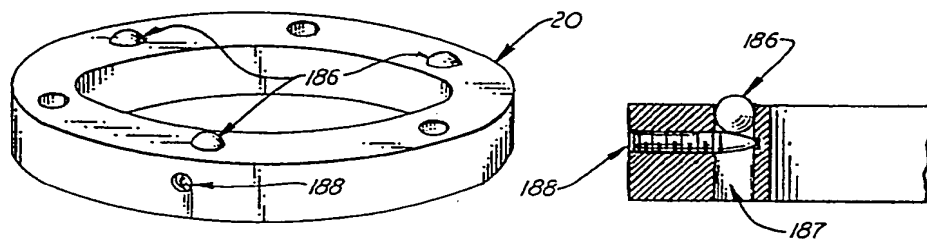
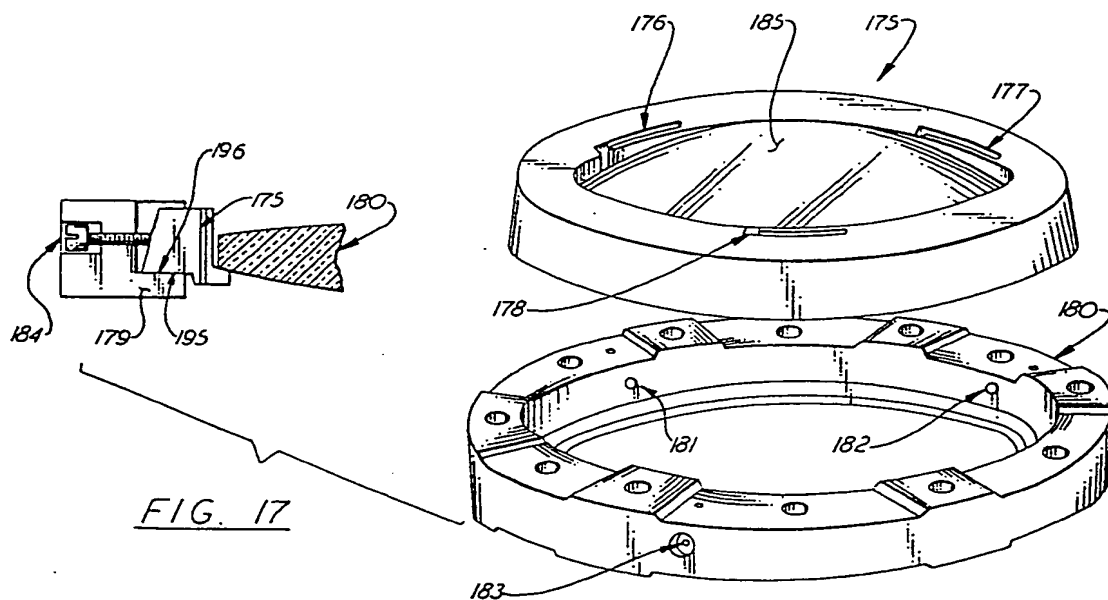


FIG. 16



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54 Precision lens mounting.

57 A precision lens mounting assembly which includes a plurality of lens cells and a plurality of lenses which correspond to the plurality of lens cells. The lens cells have an annular shape. Flexure means are disposed within the inner diameter of the lens cell which hold the lens in a predetermined spatial relation at a datum temperature to the lens cell. The flexure means return the lenses to this predetermined spatial relation following temperature excursions away from, then back to, the datum temperature. The outer diameter of the lens cells in the assembly are all substantially equal and substantially concentric about the optical axis of the lenses they hold. The upper and lower surfaces of the lens cell each have three or more precision surfaces disposed on a plane. The planes are perpendicular to the optical axis of the lens and have a predetermined spatial relation to the apex of the lens. Selected ones of the lens cells can be rotated, translated or moved axially with respect to the other lens cells in the lens assembly to correct for astigmatism, coma or spherical aberrations, respectively. Adhesive means are provided to hold the plurality of the lens cells together.

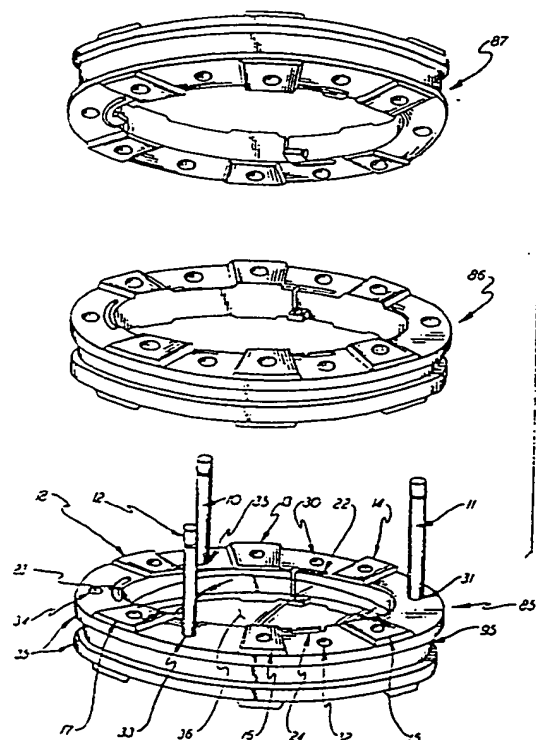


FIG. 1



European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 87 10 0468 ✓

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl. 4)
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN, vol. 8, no. 129 (P-280)[1566], 15th June 1984; & JP-A-59 31 914 (OLYMPUS KOGAKU KOGYO K.K.) 21-02-1984 * Abstract * ---	1,8,13-19,21-23	G 02 B 7/02
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN, vol. 8, no. 113 (P-276)[1550], 26th May 1984; & JP-A-59 19 911 (OLYMPUS KOGAKU KOGYO K.K.) 01-02-1984 * Abstract * ---	2-6,9	
A	US-A-4 046 458 (SMULDERS et al.) * Claim 1; figure 3 * ---	29	
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN, vol. 8, no. 18 (P-250)[1455], 26th January 1984; & JP-A-58 178 306 (OLYMPUS KOGAKU KOGYO K.K.) 19-10-1983 * Abstract * -----	1,8,13-18,21-23	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl. 4)
			G 02 B G 03 B
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 29-08-1989	Examiner GRUNFELD M.Y.E.
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